

Proponent Testimony of KSDE Children's Cabinet Budget

Senate Education Committee

February 13, 2024

Jane Works

Owner, Administrator

Humboldt Daycare and Preschool, Inc.

Chair Baumgardner and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Jane Works. My husband Joe and I built a childcare center in Humboldt, Kansas which opened in 2006 licensed for 52 children. We needed a preschool and childcare in our small town of 1800 people. In 2009 and 2020 we put two more additions on to make us licensed for 124 children. We still had a waiting list of 50+ children, so we wrote for the Child Care Capacity Accelerator grant and received 1.16 million. Thank you. It will add another infant room for 9 babies, and 30 other slots for 1-3 year olds. This will significantly address our need for more childcare spaces, especially since our location serves families in 5 counties. The Accelerator grants will be so helpful at providing more childcare throughout Kansas, I support the full \$30 million budget recommendation.

The reason most childcare facilities find it difficult to fund birth to 3 is the staff:child ratio is higher than other classrooms. I am not disputing this standard. Ratios should be kept the same, but that means the cost of keeping quality help is not usually covered by the families' childcare payments. The Baby Steps program that incentivizes and supports programs to offer infant care should be invested in significantly to ensure young families can find quality child care for their children.

In our small community in South East Kansas where poverty is significant, our childcare center has never come close to making a profit. We rely on a local manufacturing plant to subsidize us and the many grants that we receive to stay in business and keep prices as low as possible for our families. So thank you for considering these budget recommendations to raise academically, mentally and physically healthy children in our state. Please reach out to me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jane A. Works